Hints to Authors

Printed at the Riverside Press

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A PRINTER'S HINTS TO AUTHORS

By L. A. W.

CAMBRIDGE
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To the Reader.

MESSRS. HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY beg leave to offer to the literary guild, whose works they have the honor of publishing, the Hints contained in the following pages. It is not claimed that the information is new, nor that authors whose books have entertained and instructed the public for years are not in possession of it. On the contrary, it is almost impossible that experienced writers should not have had the rules here presented brought to their notice. Yet the frequent disregard of them by writers who cannot be suspected of ignorance leads to the conclusion that they are deemed of trivial importance, and that, however unfavorably their non-observance may affect the interests of the

An offering to the literary guild.

A grave error pointed out.

publisher or printer, it is a matter of entire indifference to the author whether they are observed or not. It is one of the purposes of these pages to correct such an erroneous impression, and to assure authors that they have a much greater interest in adhering to the rules referred to than they have hitherto supposed.

One design of these pages.

Motive of the publishers.

But the motive of the publishers is not purely philanthropic. The requirements of a great business demand order and system even in small matters. In their manufactory at Cambridge (The Riverside Press) they are accustomed to give personal attention to the smallest details, in order to establish the most thorough system of conducting mechanical processes as well as perfecting business methods. In devising means to overcome the difficulties which from time to time have opposed themselves to the adoption of certain rules intended to insure a greater degree of accuracy and dispatch in the transaction of business,

the publishers have had the subject now presented repeatedly forced upon their attention. Their consideration of the matter leads them to believe that the advantage of system can be extended beyond its present limits, so as to apply to the proper preparation of the manuscripts submitted to them, and that the careful observance of the rules herein recommended would largely contribute to securing greater economy, efficiency, and dispatch in the manufacture of books. But the coöperation of authors is necessary, and is therefore respectfully solicited. It is with the hope that these pages will do something towards effecting the desired result, and bringing about a better understanding of the mutual interests of the publisher, the printer, and the author, that they are submitted to the large constituency of literary workers having relations with this house.

The advantage of system.

The result hoped for.

HINTS TO AUTHORS.

Preparation of Copy.

Matters to be settled in advance.

The preparation of copy for the printer is a matter which requires careful deliberation. Before the pen is put to paper several important particulars should be determined upon, such as the kind and size of paper to be employed, the color of the ink, and what principles should be adopted as to the arrangement of parts. To aid in this decision, there are a few elementary rules, presumably within the knowledge of every one, which it would seem superfluous to repeat were they not so often disregarded. Their frequent violation implies that the obligation to follow them is not well understood, and for this reason they are

Rules, with their explanations.

inserted here, accompanied with such explanations as will make their necessity plainly apparent.

(1.) Use white paper and black ink.

(2.) The paper should be uniform in size.

(3.) Write on one side only of the paper.

(4.) Use the utmost care in writing plainly proper names, figures, and foreign words and phrases.

Color of paper and ink.

(1.) White paper and black ink are preferred, because the manuscript can be more easily read by the compositor and the proofreader. There is no objection to the yellow paper adopted by reporters, but paper of a dark blue tint should never be used, as it imposes a severe and unnecessary strain upon the eyes of the workmen engaged upon it, and increases the possibility of error through illegibility. Besides this, copy is often soiled by the careless handling of workmen. If the paper is dark and the ink pale, the writing is much ob-

secured when it reaches the proofreader, and the difficulty of reading manuscript otherwise bad is largely increased.

The size of paper.

(2.) The paper should be of uniform size, for convenience in estimating the number of pages which the proposed book will make. It should also be of medium size, neither very large nor very small. Small paper has the disadvantage of multiplying the number of sheets necessary for the purpose; and paper which exceeds a certain size is inconvenient for the compositor.

But one side of paper to be written on.

(3.) Only one side of the paper should be written on, to prevent inextricable confusion in giving out and bringing together the work of many compositors, all engaged on the same book. The habit which some authors have of writing a footnote for a certain page on the back of the previous sheet of copy is productive of confusion, as in the division of copy among several persons the footnote and its reference will often fall into different hands; and when the notes

are so voluminous as to extend from one sheet to another, much time is wasted in tracing the mutual relations of the notes and the text.

When plain writing is indispensable.

(4.) The necessity for writing proper names, figures, and foreign words and phrases so that they can be accurately made out is self-evident. Neglect to do it is the unpardonable sin. Few things are more exasperating to the compositor, or sources of greater anxiety to the proofreader, than the manuscript of a careless writer, filled with proper names and figures which there are no means of verifying, and which cannot be ascertained with certainty. The value of an important work — a law-book, for example — may be much impaired by a want of accuracy in the citation of names and figures, due to the bad copy furnished. The offensive misprints in foreign words and phrases could be rendered practically impossible if the authors who employ them would write them with sufficient care.

The proper paging of copy.

Each page of copy should be a separate and detached leaf, not folded, and each page should be numbered. If, by reason of alterations, the consecutive numbering of the copy is disarranged, that fact should be noted on the copy. For example, if pages 46, 47, 48, 49, are withdrawn from the copy to prevent their being put in type, sheet 45 should be numbered "45–49;" this accounts for the missing pages. If an insertion or addition comprising one or more sheets is to be made after the copy is paged, for instance at page 45, the extra sheets should be numbered 45*a*, 45*b*, etc., so as not to disturb the paging which follows. Smaller additions, if written on a separate piece of paper, should be attached to the page of copy to which they belong, and the place of insertion indicated thus: "*Here insert A;*" and the insertion should be marked to correspond. It is important that the paging should be consecutive through the whole mass of manuscript, not broken off and

Insertions and additions.

renewed at the various chapters or other divisions of the work.

Paragraphs should be denoted.

The neglect properly to denote paragraphs is a fruitful source of annoyance to compositors. Sometimes a magazine article is written without a paragraph in it. Very often it is impossible to guess the intention of the author in this respect from the manner in which the copy is prepared. Such cases of uncertainty are commonly referred by the compositor to the proofreader, much of whose time is consumed in examining and deciding questions of this kind, which would not arise if the author exercised a proper amount of care.

Designation of footnotes.

Footnotes should be clearly designated in the copy. Mistakes often occur from the inability of the workmen to determine whether matter written at the foot of a page is intended as an addition to the text, to be inserted at the point designated by an asterisk in the page, or as a footnote. The author of a work to be supplied with notes should adopt in his

copy a systematic method of distinguishing them from the text. Some authors write their notes with ink of a different color from that employed in the text; others separate text and notes by a heavy line across the page of copy. But if there is room for mistake as to the nature of matter meant to be a note, the word "footnote" should be written opposite it.

Extracts to be indicated.

Whenever the plan of a book necessitates the use of two kinds of type, a larger kind for the narrative or original portions, and a smaller for extracts, the copy should have the extract portions clearly marked. This may be done by drawing a vertical line opposite the extract. Neglect in this particular leads to including more or less in the extracts than was intended, and to troublesome and expensive changes afterwards.

Care in making excisions.

If it becomes desirable, after the copy is prepared, to cut out any portion, the striking out should be indicated so carefully as to leave no doubt how much is

included in the excision. A want of care in this respect is liable to be followed by the compositor setting up matter intended to be omitted, or by his leaving out matter intended to be used.

Punctuation. Authors do not, as a rule, indicate the punctuation which they wish to be followed. While this important feature may often be a marked characteristic of the writer's style, it is commonly left to the judgment of the printer. But it is highly desirable that the author should punctuate his manuscript. If this is not done, he should carefully supervise the punctuation which is supplied by the printer, as, if he does not change it, he sanctions and makes it his own.

Matters often overlooked. It is often the case that authors fail to supply very essential portions of their manuscript until they are written to and reminded of it by the publisher or printer: such as the copy for the title-page, preface, table of contents, list of illustrations, indeed all that is technically known as prefatory matter, together with

the index, if one is needed. The running-titles for the pages are also rarely thought of until the book is started, and the author has to be consulted on that point. These omissions entail an unnecessary burden of correspondence, and often delay the completion of the work.

Bad Manuscript.

Evils of bad manuscript.

By this term is meant manuscript which is unusually difficult to decipher, or which is so faultily prepared that the compositor is unable to proceed with his work without assistance. After a book has been started, and the preliminary instructions have been given by the foreman, the usual resource of the compositor, in cases of perplexity, is to ask the opinion of the proofreader. The compositor is expected not to annoy the reader with trivial questions, or such as he can settle for himself by the use of average common-sense, but to seek for aid only when he is absolutely unable to proceed save at the risk of troublesome correc-

Perplexing questions of daily occurrence.

tions in his proof. Here are some of the questions which are every day proposed to the reader, as the result of bad manuscript. "*Does the author intend this for a paragraph?*" The reader suspends his work and looks at the place indicated. The question is difficult to decide. In order to express an opinion it is necessary to read the connection. Even after doing this he may be in doubt; but he advises the compositor what course to pursue, and when the proof comes before him refers the matter to the author. "*Is this an insertion in the text, or a footnote?*" Again the connection has to be read, and advice is given. "*Here is the beginning of an extract; where does it end?*" To answer this question the reader is often obliged to examine a considerable portion of the manuscript, and even then there is the liability of a troublesome correction if he makes a mistake in his judgment. "*Will you please read this passage for me; none of us can make it*

out." Then ensues a struggle with the chirography, which may or may not be successful. "*What is that name?*" A name which a good compositor cannot read is commonly a hard one. If the reader cannot recognize it, he has recourse to such authorities as can be easily consulted. But this process consumes the time of the proofreader, whose work is interrupted and delayed, and of the compositor, who has to wait while search is being made.

Valuable time wasted.

This leads naturally to a consideration of the injustice and damage which bad manuscript causes to a number of individuals: —

Damage to a number of persons.

(1.) *The compositor.* It is universally known that the compositor works "by the piece," and that his wages depend upon the amount of work he can perform. This amount is very seriously affected by the nature of the manuscript. At best, typesetting requires constant application under the most favoring conditions in order that the compositor may

Loss of time is loss of money.

make fair wages. But if the manuscript is bad, much time is lost in deciphering it, and there is also a further loss if it becomes necessary to consult the proof-reader. And, since errors multiply in proportion to the illegibility of the manuscript, to this must be added the extra time which the compositor spends in correcting his proof, which is done at his own expense. The result is a very appreciable diminution of his wages, attributable to the nature of the copy. It is believed that this fact, familiar enough to printers, is not well understood by authors, and that what is needed to produce a reform in this particular is the knowledge on the part of authors that their negligence makes them largely responsible for the hardships of a very worthy class of workmen.

A fact not well understood.

(2.) *The proofreader.* Besides the time which the reader loses in interpreting the copy to the compositor, there is another and an important loss when the proof of bad manuscript reaches the

reading-room: the process of reading it by the copy is unduly prolonged; the number of errors to be marked is greater; and more time is needed for the subsequent revision of the proof. *Expense of proofreading increased.*

(3.) *The printer.* The printer has an eye to results. He is anxious to expedite the work. Anything that interferes with its regular progress in any of its stages is a disadvantage and sometimes an injury. Badly prepared copy requires extra time not only for typesetting and proofreading, but also for making the corrections; and sometimes a second, perhaps even a third, set of proofs is necessary before the matter is got into proper shape to send to the author. All this occasions delay. *Numerous obstructions to progress.*

(4.) *The publisher.* If the delays are many, and the publication of the book is thereby deferred, the publisher experiences a loss by not being able to issue the book at the proper season, or at a propitious time when the public are eager to have it. This failure to take advantage *The injury of delay.*

of the proper time for publication may quite materially affect the sale of the work. There is a tide in the affairs of books, as well as of men, which should be taken at the flood.

How the author suffers.

(5.) *The author.* Among the other sufferers from bad manuscript and improperly prepared copy is the author himself. In proportion as the handwriting is blind and illegible, and the arrangement of parts obscure and puzzling, questions arise which no one but the author can settle. These are referred to him on the proof, and heavy corrections sometimes ensue, from the impossibility of ascertaining the author's intention at an earlier stage. *These corrections are made at the expense of the author or of the publisher.* For instance, if, in consequence of a fault in the copy, it is necessary in the author's proof to make two or more paragraphs out of one, or one out of two or more; if text has been mistaken for a footnote, or a footnote for text; if large-type mat-

ter has been set in small type, or small-type matter in large type; if matter is made up out of its proper position, — for errors like these, and many more, due to the bad condition of the copy, the author is held responsible, and he is justly chargeable with the time spent in overrunning lines or pages, resetting and transposing matter, etc. These corrections, in the course of a large work, amount to a considerable sum. It is therefore natural to inquire if they can be avoided; and if so, how? The answer is easy: by the bestowing of such pains in the preparation of the copy that persons of average good sense and judgment can discover the author's intention. This would not obviate the necessity for all corrections, but would do away with a large part of them. The important point for the author to consider is, how much more easy and inexpensive it is to make a correction in the copy than in the type. To correct the copy requires merely the stroke of a pen; to correct

How expense may be lessened.

the type is a laborious and expensive operation.

Proofreading.

The method of reading proof.

The system of reading proof as pursued at the Riverside Press requires the reading force to be divided into two grades, "first" and "final" readers. Their names describe their duties. The first reader, with the aid of an assistant (copyreader), reads the first (or compositor's) proof. The copyreader reads the copy aloud to the proofreader, who notes all errors and deviations from the copy on the proof. Proper names and foreign words and phrases are carefully spelled to the reader, and the proof is made as nearly like the copy as is practicable. When the reading is concluded, the proof is given to the compositor for correction of the errors. After the corrections have been made by the compositor, a new proof is taken, and with the former one is submitted to a final reader for revision. Comparison of the two

Revision.

proofs is made; each error in the former proof is inspected and the correction verified in the new one, and if, by reason of carelessness or misapprehension, any errors remain uncorrected, they are marked. If these should be numerous, the proof is returned to the compositor to be again corrected. When this has been done satisfactorily, it is sent to the author.

The final reading.

On the return of the proof from the author, it is examined, and is either given out for correction previous to the final reading, or is passed at once to the proofreader for final treatment, according to its condition. If there is much correction needed, necessitating the overrunning of lines or of pages, these corrections are performed and a new proof is taken, which after it has been compared with the previous proof is then read finally. This final reading is the responsible one. It is performed by experts, and is required to be done with the greatest care. It is a complex pro-

cess, in which regard must be paid to orthography, punctuation, capitals, grammatical construction, the canons of good taste in typography, etc. This reading immediately precedes the sending of the pages to the foundry if to be electrotyped, or to the press if to be printed from type. In the latter case, a sheet is submitted to the reader after the form is on the press, to be revised by him before the printing proceeds. In case of electrotyping, proofs of the plates are taken, and are revised by the reader.

Last process before printing.

This brief outline of the method or order of events in proofreading suggests a word or two of explanation with regard to the duties of

The Proofreader.

The proofreader is a person whose natural adaptation for his duties has been developed and increased by cultivation and special training; who is thoroughly acquainted with the mechanical details of typography; and whose judg-

ment and good taste have ripened with experience. His duty is to make the book which passes under his eye typographically perfect; to be alert, careful, and as helpful to authors as he may be consistently with other duties. Occasionally an author takes it for granted that the reader is a sort of sub-editor, whom the printer kindly provides to assist and supplement his labors, and that the supervision of his proofs is to be entirely entrusted to him as a matter of course. Sometimes an author writes to the printer respecting an inaccuracy which he has discovered in his book after its issue, and which he should himself have seen in the proof, naively expressing his surprise that the proofreader did not correct it. But this important fact should be kept in mind: *the proofreader is not an editor of the books he reads.* While he may be of much and valuable assistance to an author by calling attention to imperfections, and by raising questions for the author to deter-

Duty of the proofreader.

Proofreader not an editor.

mine, his duty in this respect is simply monitorial, — that of pointing out. The author should not seek to transfer to the reader any portion of his own duty or responsibility. It is not the duty of the reader to verify the work of the author, — for instance, the footings of columns of figures, the accuracy of texts of Scripture, historical dates, or poetical quotations. For all these things — his names, dates, facts, together with his diction — the author alone is responsible.

Verification of author's work.

The Markings on Proofs.

Markings explained.

Proofs are sent to the author marked in blue, to enable the reader's marks to be distinguished from the author's, which should by preference be made with a pen and black ink. Most of the marks made upon proofs are familiar to authors, but the reasons which lead the reader to underscore certain words or phrases may need explanation. These are commonly referable to some one of the following causes: The copy may be

illegible, and uncertainty is felt whether it has been rightly interpreted; a word underlined may be grammatically incorrect; if a proper noun, the spelling may not be in accordance with popular authorities; if a date, it may be illegible in the copy, or doubt is felt as to its correctness. Two verbs underscored and connected by a line from one to the other may signify a variation in tense. Repetitions of words or phrases are indicated in the same way, and so also are contradictory or conflicting statements. The reason for the underscoring is generally apparent. If it is liable not to be understood, a word or two of explanation is written in the margin. In general, *the underlining of a word or phrase invokes the author's special attention*, and is equivalent to "Is this right as it stands?" When passages thus underlined remain unnoticed on the proof, the presumption is that the author prefers to keep them as they are. It should not be inferred that the underlinings neces-

Underscored words and phrases.

sarily call for a change. In some cases the proofreader proposes a correction in the margin, and places after it a mark of interrogation. If the author accepts the suggestion by cancelling the interrogation mark, the correction becomes the author's. If he does not accept it, he removes doubt by drawing his pen through both correction and query.[1]

Treatment of queries.

Author's Proofs.

These are the proofs which are sent to the author, on which he designates his corrections. It has been said that these corrections should be made with ink, not with pencil. The reason for it is, that pencil marks are liable to become so much obscured by the handling of compositors as to be undecipherable. If

How to mark corrections.

[1] In Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, at the end of the division entitled "Arbitrary Signs used in Writing and Printing," there will be found a Specimen of a Corrected Proof-Sheet, which may be consulted by those who are in doubt how to designate their corrections. It exemplifies the markings most commonly found on proof-sheets, and is accompanied with explanations of their meaning.

a query is made by the reader, it should be definitely noticed by either accepting or rejecting it. If the reader makes a mark which the author desires to overrule, the reader's mark should not be erased, but marked across with a pen, and the word "*stet*" written near it. All corrections should be made in the margin of the page, not in its interior. The author should be particular to mark all the corrections he wishes made, and not mark a few, and leave it to be inferred that similar corrections are to be made in similar cases elsewhere. The compositor who performs the corrections has no discretion allowed him, and cannot infer a correction which is not marked. No pains should be spared to make the markings clear and intelligible, as in many cases the author cannot revise his corrections.

Careful marking enjoined.

When proofs are sent to the author in duplicate, the author should make his corrections upon the proof containing the marks of revision, and return the

Duplicate proofs.

proof so marked to the printer. This is important. The unmarked proof may be retained for reference. Proofs should be returned at the earliest moment. A delay of a few days occasions much trouble. The ticket upon the proofs is intended to remind the author of this fact.

Author's Corrections.

The expense of changes.

These are the changes which the author makes on his proof in diction, punctuation, capitals, or arrangement. For these changes the author is responsible, and the time employed in making them is charged to him. The author should remember this fact, if he wishes to avoid expense. A very small change may draw after it a heavy correction. It may even be necessary to overrun a long paragraph in consequence of altering a single word near its beginning. Experienced authors sometimes learn how to adapt their corrections to the lines, so as to avoid much overrunning.

When one does not possess this knowledge, and the changes are numerous, the expense is a matter of some moment.

What corrections belong to the author.

With the desire to diminish this expense, the author sometimes asks, "*Are all the marks on my proof, the blue as well as the black, corrected at my expense?*" The answer is, *No;* only the corrections which the author makes, or authorizes to be made, are chargeable to him.

Unmarked errors.

A source of complaint, now and then, on the part of the author is the presence in his proof of unmarked typographical errors. These do not always imply negligence in the reading or the revision. In the process of correction by the compositor, new errors, which did not before exist, may be made, and these new errors sometimes escape detection in the revision of the proof which is sent to the author. Even if they were not observed by the author, they would have the chance to be caught on the final reading that always takes place before

printing. But the question may be asked, *Are these errors which the author discovers and marks to be considered author's changes, and thus charged to him?* If important, *No.* But as this class of errors is almost always of a trifling nature, such as an inverted letter, or an error affecting only a single letter or word, and as it would be manifestly impossible to keep a separate account of them, they are usually corrected with the author's corrections. But this very trivial matter is much more than offset by two burdens of expense that should properly fall on the author, but are borne by the printer: (1.) As has been already said elsewhere, author's proofs which contain few corrections are given at once to the reader for final reading without first receiving correction by a compositor, for which time would be charged. The author's corrections are thus combined with those designated by the final reader, and the expense of making them is assumed by the printer.

Two burdens of expense borne by the printer.

(2.) It is often necessary, after the author's corrections are made, and the final proof is being read, for the proofreader to make further corrections, when the author has marked only a few of a number of similar cases which should be alike, and has overlooked the remainder. Also, certain corrections of the author draw certain consequences after them. If these are not perceived until the final proof, the reader marks them, and the cost of these supplementary corrections (really the author's) is borne by the printer.

Supplementary corrections.

Plate Corrections.

After the plates have been cast, and before printing, it is sometimes desirable to make a few slight corrections in them, arising from later and more perfect information: to insert figures attached to cross-references, referring to pages coming later in the work which could not be designated at the time of casting, to alter one spelling for another, to change one

Alterations in plates.

The abuse of plate corrections.

word for another, etc. The habit of making changes in the plates is liable to abuse, and the practice is to be discouraged. Corrections are sometimes asked for which should have been made in the author's proof, not to say the copy. It should be remembered that plates do not readily lend themselves to changes, and that only the simplest corrections can be made without resetting and recasting. It is obvious that this is attended with considerable expense. Even simple corrections are objectionable. The insertion of type in an electrotype plate is to be deplored, owing to the wear being greater on the type than on the plate. Moreover, if many corrections and changes are made, they weaken the plate and greatly impair its durability. Authors who desire their plates to last as long as possible should make few or no changes in them.

Injury done to plates by corrections.

Recapitulation.

A double advantage.

The author who has taken the pains to read the foregoing pages will perceive, it is hoped, that the hints therein given are for the mutual advantage of the author and the publisher or printer; that by a careful preparation of copy and attention to other rules suggested, much time and consequent expense can be saved in the form of author's corrections, and greater promptness and efficiency be secured in the process of manufacturing. That this object, economy and dispatch in manufacturing books, should be as much desired by the author as by the publisher need not be urged; but that its accomplishment rests largely with the author is a fact which may be emphasized by repetition.

Congratulations.

The publishers congratulate themselves upon the very pleasant relations which they hold with those to whom these Hints are addressed, and are glad of the opportunity of frankly pointing

out to them how they may diminish the expense of bringing their books before the public; for in this respect the interests of the author and of the publishers are identical.

Manuscripts already prepared.

If any one into whose hands these Hints shall fall should imagine that they come too late to be of service in reference to copy in their possession which is finished and ready for sending to the printer, it may be urged that an examination of the copy anew, with regard to its condition, may possibly be of benefit. If an inspection of it should reveal obscurities and matters hard to be understood, the author should by all means consult his advantage by making them plain in the copy rather than in the type.

Acknowledgments.

Words of appreciation.

THE publishers desire, at the close of these Hints, to put on record their grateful appreciation of the pains taken by a large number of the authors with whom they have business relations to conform to the cardinal principles here laid down. With many of the manuscripts submitted to them, there can be absolutely no fault found. The paper, the handwriting, and the arrangement are perfect. The authors have evidently embodied in their manuscript not a crude first draft, but matured and finished work. To such methodical and painstaking writers the preceding pages can have no application. The studious avoidance, by these writers, of the negligences into which the busy literary

Obligations acknowledged.

worker is too often betrayed implies a care which is worthy of praise; and the publishers are glad to acknowledge their sense of obligation to these authors for the thorough manner in which they have prepared their manuscripts, and express the hope that they have already experienced the advantages which result from such careful preparation.

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